Religion / Cult	Founder	Authoritative Book(s)	General Description / History	Core Beliefs	Christian Response
Buddhism	Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha), a prince from northern India who lived approximately 563-483 B.C.	Various, but the oldest and most authoritative are complied in the <i>Pali Canon</i> .	Buddhism is the belief system of those who follow the Buddha, the Enlightened One, a title given to its founder. The religion has evolved into three main schools of thought: 1) Theravada (Doctrine of the elders) rooted in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, 2) Mahayana (The Greater Vehicle) rooted in China, Korea and Japan, and 3) Varayana (The Tantrism or Lamaism) rooted in Tibet, Nepal and Mongolia.	Buddhism is an impersonal religion of attempted self-perfection, the end of which is death (extinction) not life. Beliefs are summarized in the Four Noble doctrines: 1) life is full of suffering (dukkha); 2) suffering is caused by craving (samudaya); 3) suffering will cease only when craving ceases (nirodha); 4) this can be achieved by following the Noble Eightfold Path consisting of right views, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right contemplation. Nothing in life is permanent, individual selves do not exist, everything is determined by an impersonal law of moral causation (karma), and in breaking out of the cycle of reincarnation one may extinguish the flame of life and enter into pure "non-existence" or nirvana.	The renewed Eightfold Path: <i>Right views</i> : Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, no one come to the Father but by Him (John 14:6); and there is no salvation in any other (Acts 4:12). <i>Right aspirations</i> : Quarrels come from sin (James 4:103), and right desires honor God (1 Cor. 10:31). <i>Right Speech</i> all men will be held accountable at Judgment for their speech (Matthew 12:36). <i>Right conduct</i> : The one who loves Jesus must obey him (John 14:21). <i>Right livelihood</i> : God providentially cares for those who trust in Him (Matthew 6:31-33). <i>Right effort</i> followers of Christ must give their best efforts to please him by exemplifying His righteousness in holy fruit (Hebrews 12:1-12). <i>Right mindfulness</i> : the sinful mind cannot please God (Romans 8:7). <i>Right contemplation</i> Inner peace comes only from Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:1-4).
Hinduism	No single person, but developed in India.	Vedas, Upanishads, epics, and Puranas.	Hinduism is the oldest organized world religion composing a complex family of sects holding to a diverse belief system based on "scriptures" written over the period of 2000 years (1500 B.C.—250 A.D.). It has no single creed and does not recognize absolute truth or universal revelation. It developed in India, and its influence has emerged into sects such as the Church of Christ, Christian Science, Unity School of Christianity, and the New Age movement.	God (Brahman) is the one impersonal, ultimate, but unknowable, spiritual reality. Everything else is ultimately an illusion. Everything, then, is "God" (pantheism). Man is the result of a manifestation or spark of Brahman trapped in the physical body. Repeated cycles of reincarnation are needed before one can be released from the body. Ultimately one is reabsorbed into Brahman. Hindius have no concept of rebellion against a Holy God, and sin, for them, is simply ignorance of the reality of Brahman. Salvation, then, is achieved through discipline (yoga) taught by a religious teacher (guru), hoping to break the cycle of reincarnation and the future hope of re-absorption. Individualistic, personal worship to a "god" or "idol" is done by chanting (mantras), incense and dancing on a daily basis.	God is personal and has personal attributes (Gen. 1:3; 6:6, 12; Exo. 3:15; 16:12; 20:5; Lev. 20:3; Psalm 2:4; 59:9; Amos 9:4). Christianity affirms the reality of the material world and the genuineness of God's creation as good (Gen. 1:1ff; Heb. 11:3). The Bible warns those who confuse God and creation (Rom. 1:22-23). People are created in God's image (Gen. 1:27). The body's physical resurrection and eternal worth are emphasized in John 2:18-22 and 1 Cor. 15:1ff. Sin is not ignorance of unity with Brahman, but rather the willful acting of the sinful mind against God and His commandments (Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 1:28-32; 2:1-16; 3:9-19; Gal. 3:22). Salvation is a gift from God by faith in Jesus Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-10). No religious deeds can save (Mat. 7:22-23; Rom. 9:32; 11:6; Gal. 2:16.)
Islam	Muhammad 570-632 A.D. Founded: 622 A.D.	The Qur'an, the sacred book dictated in Arabic by the Angel Gabriel to Muhammad containing 114 surahs or chapters.	Islam is the world's youngest major world religion. It claims to supercede and replace Judaism and Christianity, following the visions and teachings of Muhammad. Muhammad is the "last and greatest" prophet of God (the seal of all prophets). From its inception it has been aggressively missionary, but within such evangelistic endeavors it uses military force. In one century, it spread across the Middle East, most of north Africa, and as far as India.	God, Allah, is numerically and absolutely one, beyond man's knowledge, and only his will may be known. Serious sin is to ascribe plurality to Allah. Original sin is viewed as a lapse by Adam. Angels are Allah's agents, and Jinn, or evil angels, exist, including Satan. The world will be judged at the end of time and the five pillars of Islam will serve as the basis for judgment. Five Pillars: 1) The confession of faith that Allah is the only God and Muhammad is His prophet, 2) Prayer (Salah) facing Mecca five times a day preceded by ceremonial washing. 3) Almsgiving (Zakat) giving 2.5% to the poor and for the propagation of Islam, 4) The fat (Sawn) observed every lunar month, 5) Pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lifetime for those who are able. Jihad (holy war) is pronounced against all non-Muslims.	God is Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons in one eternal essence (Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 2:18). Sin is any want of conformity or transgression of the law of God (Rom. 5:19; 3:10; Eph. 2:1; Psa. 51:5; Matt. 15:19-20). At the Day of Judgment, sinner will be separated from those in Christ, and cast into hell for not believing in the salvation offered in Christ alone (Matt. 25:33-43; Rom. 2:15-16; Luke 16:26; 2 Thess. 1:8-9). Salvation is not accomplished by works to am impersonal deity, but by grace, through faith, in Christ and the works he did in atoning for the sins of all those fallen in Adam that He came to redeem (Rom. 3:24; 5:15-16; 8:30; 3:22-28; 4:5-8; 5:17-19; II Cor. 5:19, 21; Titus 3:5, 7; Eph. 1:7; Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; John 1:12; 6:44-45, 65; Acts 10:43; 13:38-39; Phil. 1:29; 3:9; Eph. 2:7-8).
CULTS, WORLD RELIGIONS AND THE OCCULT "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" 1 Timothy 4:1					
Seventh Day Adventism	Ellen G. White 1827-1915 A.D. Founded Cult: 1861	Ellen G. White's visions and writings are said to be inspired along with the Bible.	SDAs teach that the church founder possessed a modern "spirit of prophesy." It was derived from several previous movements. Those movements included the Millerite Movement (Second Adventism), which had predicted the coming of Christ in 1844, and Seventh-day Sabbatarianism taught by Joseph Bates. White's visions combined these theological ideas into a unique religious system. She established the movement in the 1850s and founded it officially in 1861 in Battle Creek, MI.	The SDA church believes they are the true remaining remnant of true worship in the church. They teach that the Sabbath is still observed on the seventh day of the week, and the mark of the beast is to worship on Sunday. They teach salvation by grace, but require certain works (as the Judaizers did) to maintain salvation. They say that the true "holy of holies" sanctuary of God is in heaven, where, in 1844, Jesus began the second phase of his atoning ministry. They teach that upon death both the righteous and wicked sleep in the grave (soul sleep). They believe we live in the immediate last days, and that the second coming is close at hand, and that bible prophecy is interpreted by world history and the teaching of Mrs. White. At the second coming, those "lost" will be annihilated out of existence.	The church is the body of believers in Christ in which the Gospel is proclaimed, faith is nurtured, and spiritual gifts are exhibited; where right worship, sound doctrine, the right administration of the sacraments and church discipline are done in order (Matthew 16:15-19; Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:14; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:21; 4:4-13). As it is the law of nature, a due proportion of time should be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binds all men in all ages, he has particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week, and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, called the Lord's day (Exod. 20:8-11; Isa. 56:2-7; Gen. 2:2-3; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10; Matt. 5:17ff; Mark 2:27-28).
Mormonism	Joseph Smith, Jr. 1805-1844 A.D. Founded Cult: 1830	The Book of Mormon, which smith received from the angel Moroni, and his writings, The Pearl of Great Price and Doctrines and Covenants.	Mormonism follows Joseph Smith and his alleged encounter with the angel Moroni as a 14 year old boy alone in the woods. At this age Smith dug up the golden plates of the book of Mormon on the Hill Cumorah. These plates contained the further revelation of Christ in the Americas after his resurrection, and they claim a legacy of Jews traveled to the Americas. He also claimed that all current religions were false. Smith was the only one who ever "saw" these plates, though three others testified they saw them in a vision. In 1830, two weeks after the Book of Mormon was published, the church was organized.	According to Mormonism: the Bible is not complete, and further revelation (the Book of Mormon and the writings of Joseph Smith) are needed. The Book of Mormon is the prophesized "stick" of Ephraim in Ezekiel 37:15-20, and the KJV Bible is the stick of Judah. There are an infinite number of gods in the universe, each one having his own planet. God is simply and exalted man, and has the characteristics of a man (eyes, feet, arm, etc.). The church begun by Christ "fell away," but was reestablished in 1830 as the Mormon church—the only true church. They reject justification by faith alone, and embrace a works salvation, given to those who earn favor and attain godhood. At death, Mormon males go to Paradise and inherit a planet with multiple wives, and non-Mormons go to a prison-hell.	God reveals his will today in the Bible, and it alone is inspired revelation (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21). There is only one true God, and he is not an exalted man (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 43:10; 44:6-8; John 17:3; 1 Tim. 2:5) God is spirit (Num. 23:19; John 4:24). The Bible affirms the virgin birth (Matt. 1:18-23; John 1:1-18; Phil. 2:6-11; Heb. 1:3). Salvation is a gift from God through faith in Christ's work (Eph. 2:8-10; Romans 5:6-8). Church membership does not save (Heb. 3:1; 7:23-24; 9:11-15). The Bible warms against false prophets (Deut. 18:21-22; 2 Cor. 11:12-15; 2 Pet. 2:1). Humans cannot save themselves (Isa. 64:5-6; Rom. 3:20, 28). There are only two eternal states for human beings: eternal bliss in heaven as a result of Christ's salvation for his elect, and eternal damnation for the wicked (Matt. 5:12; Rom. 8:38-39; Phil. 3:20; Matt. 5:29-30).
Jehovah's Witnesses	Charles Taze Russell 1852-1916 A.D. Founded Cult: 1884	The New World Translation of the Bible (JW's own transla- tion of the Greek Text) and the Watchtower Society peri- odical interpreting the Bible.	The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (the organization run by the Governing Body of the Jehovah's Witnesses) claims that it is the sole channel of information between God and humanity. They base this claim on a complicated, Bible based chronology devised by the Adventist N.H. Barbour in 1875. The founder of Jehovah's Witnesses, Charles T. Russell, obtained many of his ideas from Adventists and others who dabbled in "Bible prophecy." In 1884, Russell founded the <i>Watchtower Society</i> which became the legal corporation used by the International Bible Students, the early name for Jehovah's Witnesses.	The Bible for the true church is the New World Translation. All others contain error. The Watchtower Society is God's Prophet which correctly interprets the Bible, and is the sole channel for the flow of biblical truth to men on earth. JWs are Arian, denying the Trinity and the deity of Christ. The Holy Spirit is not a person but a "force". At death there is no consciousness and God takes back the "life" and creates a new body at the resurrection where it is re-deposited. Salvation is found in the teaching and interpretation of the Watchtower society. There are two classes of saved people: the 144,000 who will inherit heaven, and the "great crowd" or "other sheep" who inherit a renewed earth. Hell is simply the grave, not eternal punishment, and at Armageddon, all non-JWs will be destroyed.	The Bible alone is the inspired word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The New World Translation is a corruption of the Greek Text. The Trinity is clearly taught in the Bible; one true God in the persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 1 Cor. 2:4-6). The Bible affirms Christ's deity and equality with God (John 1:1, 14; 5:17-18, 23; 8:56-59; 10:30-33; Col. 1:15-20; 2:9. The personality of the Holy Spirit is not a force (John 14:16-17, 26; 16:13; Rom. 8:26-27; Psalm 139:7; Luke 1:35; Acts 5:3-4; Rom. 1; 1 Cor. 2:11). God is the God of the living, not the dead (Luke 20:37-38). The Bible teaches that people live on after death (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23-24; Rev. 6:9-10; 14:13). It is impossible to save yourself, much less through the Watchtower Organization (Rom. 4:4-5; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:5). An eternal Hell is real (Matt. 25:41; Mark 9:43-48).
Christian Science	Mary Baker Eddy 1821-1910 A.D. Founded Cult: 1866-1876	Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, Eddy's own writings interpreting the Bible.	Mary Baker Eddy fell on the winter ice and was injured severely. Lying in bed in pain, she read the account of one of Jesus' healings, and had a sudden insight into the heart of true "being", the "mind" that is God. It was a new view of reality. She rose from her bed completely healed. She said, "That short experience included a glimpse of the great fact that I have since tried to make plain to others, namely, Life in and of Spirit; this life being the sole reality of existence". This revelation epitomized in the publication of "Science and Health With Key To The Scriptures." She refined her "revelation" until she could demonstrate "healing" on a regular basis.	It is unchristian to believe that pain and sickness are anything but illusions. God is the great "Father-Mother" who is unknowable in human terms. Christian Science rejects the Trinity as polytheism, and rejects the deity of Jesus Christ. The virgin birth was Mary's mind over matter thought process that brought out the eternal mind of God through her. Atonement is the sinner's work, not the finished work of Christ on the cross. The New Birth is a continual self-justification. The Holy Spirit is not a person, but the Divine Science given to us by God. Healings without medicine are a mark of the true enlightened Christian, and anyone, through silent prayers, may heal others. Satan, sin and evil are illusions, and hell does not exist.	In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost (Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 2:18). The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, took upon himself man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance (John 1:1, 14; 1 John 5:20; Phil. 2:6; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14, 16-17; 4:15; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Gal. 4:4; Matt. 1:18, 20-21). Every sin, both original and actual, is a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary to it bringing guilt upon the sinner where he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, (1 John 3:4; Rom. 2:15; 3:9, 19; Eph. 2:3; Gal. 3:10)
New Age	No official founder, but the term signifies an informal designation for a large number of separate groups who do not publicly identify with a formal organization.	No books; various groups and spiritual leaders including ideas such as annihilation, pantheism, reincarnation, etc.	New Age generally describes movements, groups, and ideas that advocate approaching life in ways different from established norms in economics, education, religion, and family. "New" does not refer to time, but to "difference." It may be better to deem it a "shift in cultural values." It is a shift towards the "experiential" and characterized by subjective spiritual values. It has been around for thousands of years, predating Christ and seen throughout early pagan and mystery religions. It was made popular in the Americas during the middle sixties and early seventies.	All reality, including God, humankind, the created universe, time, space, etc., is a unitary whole. Whatever is, is "god." You are God, and God is within you. You will never die, and through the process of reincarnation, you will go through many lifetimes. You can change your consciousness. You are divine, and the problem is that you do not realize you are divine. Using techniques to transform your consciousness (transcendental meditation, yoga, mind altering disciplines) you can break free from ignorance. All religions are true, and therefore they are all one. All enlightened ones have learned and taught the same thing. New Age denies hell, sin, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the virgin birth and every other exclusive doctrine, though this is contradictory to their teaching that all religions	God is personal, and has attributes appropriate to personality. The Bible affirms that all is not God (Eccl. 5:2; Mark 10:6; 13:19; Matt. 11:25-27; Acts 17:28). Human beings are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; Psalm 8:5). The Bible denies reincarnation and affirms the death of Christ for sinners (Heb. 9:27-28; Eph. 5:25). The "answer" is not within us, but instead, the problem is in us—sin (Mark 7:21-23; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Psalm 51:5). All religions are not true; such is a contradictory statement. Christ said that He was the only way to heaven, and New Age teaches that all paths lead to heaven (John 14:6). There is no "age of Aquarius" coming, but rather, the Day of Judgment where all men shall be judged for their sin, and their faithlessness in Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and men (1 Thess. 4:17; Rom. 2:15-16).
Occultism	No official founder. Four primary categories of the occult are divination, magic and witchcraft, Spiritism, and Satanism.	Various groups and spiritual leaders; the Book of the Dead, Alister Crowley's "Book of Law" and Anton Lavey's Satanic Bible (1976).	The word "occult" comes from the Latin <i>occultus</i> meaning "hidden, secret or concealed." It includes a number of religious practices involving supernatural and natural forces available only to people with special knowledge. Beliefs in ghosts, Atlantis, UFOs, and various superstitions accompany these ideas. Satanism is akin more directly to the darkest side of the occult. Satanists are divided up into those who believe in a literal Satan, and worship him, and those who believe "Satan" is a force, or power in opposition to Christianity which they resist. The Black Mass is central to Satanic worship and involves animal or human sacrifices, sex and drugs.	Divination, also known as fortune telling, is the most popular of occultist practices. Astrology, foretelling the future, Palmistry, crystal gazing, and the Ouija Board all propose to inform men by supernatural means. Magic and witchcraft attempt to manipulate universal forces to receive some power not available ordinarily. Witches, who are involved in Wicca, worship Mother goddess and a horned god and claim to use the power of these deities to heal the sick, bring good fortune, or make predictions. Spiritism is rooted in the belief that spirits of the dead can communicate wit the living. Those who are sensitive to the spirit world can communicate and gain information about the hereafter. Satanism is the worship of Satan, or the use of the darkest power of the occult in opposition to Christianity.	The Bible condemns the use of divination (Deut. 18:9-14), astrology (Isaiah 47:12-15; Jer. 10:2-3), magic and witchcraft (Deut. 18:10-11), Spiritism (Lev. 19:31; 20:6; Isa. 8:19) and Satanism (Eph. 6:12-13; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 4:33-36). The Bible teaches that Satan comes to destroy the work of God and of Christ (2 Tim. 2:26; 1 Pet. 5:8). Christ destroyed Satan's power at the cross for the Christian (1 John 3:8; Eph. 1:18-23; Col. 2:15). The Bible clearly condemns all occult practices and involvement (Num. 22:7; 23:23; Deut. 18:10; 2 Ki. 17:17; Jer. 14:14; Ezek. 12:24; 13:6-7; 21:21-23; Acts 16:16). Satan is the father of lies and the deceiver, out to maliciously destroy the human race in opposition to the saving work of Jesus Christ, God's only Son and the only hope of salvation (1 Chr. 21:1; Job 1:7-12; Zech 3:1; Rom. 16:20; 1 John 2:14; John 16:33).